

Committee of Concern

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STATEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF CONCERN

The State Police Benevolent Association hearings now being conducted at the Newark City Hall represent a serious threat to peaceful and constructive efforts to rehabilitate the City.

This investigation into charges of police brutality alleged to have occurred during last summer's disturbance serves no positive purpose. The community -- particularly Negro citizens -- do not believe that the police can honestly and impartially investigate their own actions.

The fact that the hearings are being held at Newark's City Hall implies official municipal sanction. This leads to further alienation of the community and the City's government. It serves to further fan the embers of racial tension which the Committee of Concern and civic leaders are attempting to extinguish.

In our society the role of the police is to enforce the laws and to protect the members of the community which it serves. These responsibilities emanate from authority granted by the people and are clearly defined.

A serious threat to all segments of society arises when a police agency misinterprets its prescribed duties and assumes the roles of judge and jury. The current P.B.A. hearings are an example of this misinterpretation.

The community must protect its rights by making it clear that the role the P.B.A. is undertaking is the responsibility of other agencies of government and the usurpation of these prerogatives can not be permitted.

Therefore, the Committee of Concern calls upon all segments of our community to join in halting these hearings and the insidious danger they represent.

Malcolm D. Talbott
Co-Chairman